FASHION INTERNATIONAL
NEWS AND VIEWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION WORLD
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SPRING '88: MILAN, LONDON, PARIS

THE NEVER-FADING LUSTRE OF DENIM

Ever since the 60's and the "trickle up" theory, Americans have been wearing denim. With its rugged, down home and earthy appeal, denim has become an American classic. Through the years, denim has been strong, weaving in and out of the current fashion trends, offering a youthful alternative for any age group.

For Spring '88 denim takes over, blending beautifully with the movement of stretch fibers. Since skirts continue to hike up the thigh, the addition of stretch gives shorter lengths flexibility. Designers use this combination for more than the basic "jeans and jacket", making denim more versatile. CALVIN KLEIN SPORT adds Lycra to a zippered back denim sundress, in pale pink and yellow. A lightly stone-washed blueberry-- used for a body-conscious tank dress by PERRY ELLIS AMERICA; while their short, tapered skirt and seamed, slim pant is in white peony denim, all with 2% Lycra.

Color has made a complete circle in the denim market and the new names are indicative. The news this Spring-- Blue! Deep, dark indigo is being revived and it never looked better. Still prewashed, but only for comfort so that the color remains true. CALVIN KLEIN SPORT calls it "black water denim", pre-but not stone-washed; PERRY ELLIS AMERICA prefers "blueberry"; while MARITHE AND FRANCOIS GIRBAUD employ a new process to their dark washes called "aqua soft", which softens the fabric without abrading or whitening. In addition to blue, solid white and iced pastels are good sellers. GITANO shows a 5-pocket, pedal pusher in peach, mint or raspberry "crystal wash" and "white stretch limo".

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DENIM-- continued

With its new found movement and solid clean colors, denim readily adapts to Spring's new silhouettes. By far, the most popular shape in bottoms is the capri; and for jackets, the crop is high. CALVIN KLEIN SPORT shows both, slimming and stretchable in pastel pink and yellow, "surfer" white and "black water" blue. Skirts and shorts also look good, with the skirts showing more leg than the shorts. RALPH LAUREN ROUGHWEAR offers a "dungaree skimmer" skirt in 16" or 22" and a walking short to the knee. MARITHE AND FRANCOIS GIRBAUD give the tried and true a twist, with a ruffled bottom mini skirt and an asymmetrical-zippered motorcycle jacket.

As current growth continues, retailers expect an increase in sales for denim into the next season. Today's technology in fabrication, and the appeal of the young, catapults denim into the fashion arena and coincides with the modern, clean look of Spring. Having outlived the "designer name" boom of the 70's and most recently being "stone-washed", "distressed" and "destroyed", denim finally becomes a fashion-oriented fabric and not simply a novelty.

Perry Ellis America

EUROPE: MILAN, LONDON, PARIS

MILAN

This was not Milan at full throttle. The collections for Spring '88 at times appeared to be more suitable for leggy teenagers than the woman with enough cash to pick up the tab. Giorgio Armani, as usual, saved the day, delivering a timely lesson on how to dress fashionably without being ridiculous.

TRENDS: Hemlines 4-8 inches above the knee; tailored shorts and matching jackets; culottes; easy long, tapered, high-waisted cropped and narrow pleated trousers; Skirts-- flounced, frilled, tiered or gathered over stiffened petticoats: newest -- the egg or tulip shape which curves from the hip to the hemline; Origami (Japanese paper sculpture), the newest approach in shaping plain fabrics; Jackets-- Bolero, cropped, long and lean, lighter, close to the body, soft cuts that follow hips and waists in fluid fabrics; Dresses-- coat to body hugging minis, wrap waists and ruffles.

FABRICS: Plain poplin, washed and wrinkled silk, silk tweed, silk rayon, quilted silk, leather, thin gabardine, fine flannel, linen, wool crepe, crepon, cotton and silk knits, denim, organza, chiffon, georgette, tulle, taffeta, sequinned, and grosgrain silk, lace.

PATTERNS: Houndstooth, glen plaid, stripes and checks, small to wallpaper and chinese porcelain florals.

Giorgio Armani

MILAN-- continued

COLORS: Neutrals-- pale grey, mushroom, taupe, ice, slate. Washed-out Pastels-- cream, pink, apricot, smoky blue. Deep Funky Shades-- damson, clove, lovat, tobacco, thunder grey. Brights-- red, blue, lettuce green, sun yellow, violet, orange. Black, navy, white.

DESIGNER FOCUS

GIORGIO ARMANI: Long double-breasted waisted jacket with a narrow continuous band in place of a collar or revers, worn with easy trousers; gathered skirts; double georgette skirts that skim the knee; shorts and culottes; scallop edged silk blouses; short over long sleeve shirts; vests. Late day-- full skirts with petticoats; silk jackets in Chinese porcelain prints; muted floral pattern dresses; sinuous strapless dresses; jeweled lace jackets with wool trousers; jeweled bodice dresses with very full draped skirts over petticoats.

BYBLOS: Curvy, body clinging denim dresses; cream silk duster coats over lace trimmed camisoles sashed into matching shorts; silk, scoop neck, flounced mini dresses with lace bustles; cropped short sleeve jackets; oversize loose shirts; long, transparent skirts.

ROMEO GIGLI FOR CALLAGHAN: Small shoulder cropped cardigan and jackets; Nehru jackets; men's style blazers; high-neck fitted blouses that cross at bust; mid-calf tiered skirts with wrap pleats; pleated narrow trousers; knee length tight sheaths with wrapping crisscrossing single sleeve tops that balloon over hips; draped bodice.

FERRE: Bullfighter jackets; slim minis; high-waisted cropped trousers; coat dresses with stiffened pleated skirts over shiny slim skirts; bare back and body hugging dresses; short cocktail sheaths; short off-the-shoulder bubble dresses; see through blouses.

GENNY: Long, straight jackets over tiered or knife pleated skirts; pleated Bermudas; tunic blouses over loose, cropped, pleated trousers; short belted jackets over stiff bubble skirts; floral, crepe de chine dresses with full bellshaped skirts; strapless gowns with large geometric shells.

KRIZIA: Long, lean jackets with Bermuda shorts; short jackets fitted at the hip; rounded mid thigh skirts in solids or prints; low neck camisoles; double-breasted coat dresses; button back sheaths; lean skirts with origami fold in back or front, topped with cropped jacket.

Byblos

LONDON

The fashion palate served up by the London designers is lively, feminine and young without being juvenile.

TRENDS: The return of the dress - newest shape is "The Skimp", a dress that is curved to the body with arcs of seams; Skirts-- the skirt of the season is a tulip shape, rounded at the hips and narrowing down gently at the hem-- other alternatives are short pleated skirts and mini dirndls in very light fabrics; emphasis on the bosom, feminine blouses, scooped bodices and jackets cut on the curve; bare shoulders; rising hemlines; La Bamba; Latin American folkloric; flower prints and polka dots; glitter and embroidery.

COLORS: Fiesta Brights-- red, royal, purple, yellow, emerald, turquoise, orange. Sun Faded-- slate grey, sand, taupe, coral pink. Chalk Pales-- aqua, eau de nil, peach, lilac. Black, white, navy.

Alistair Blair

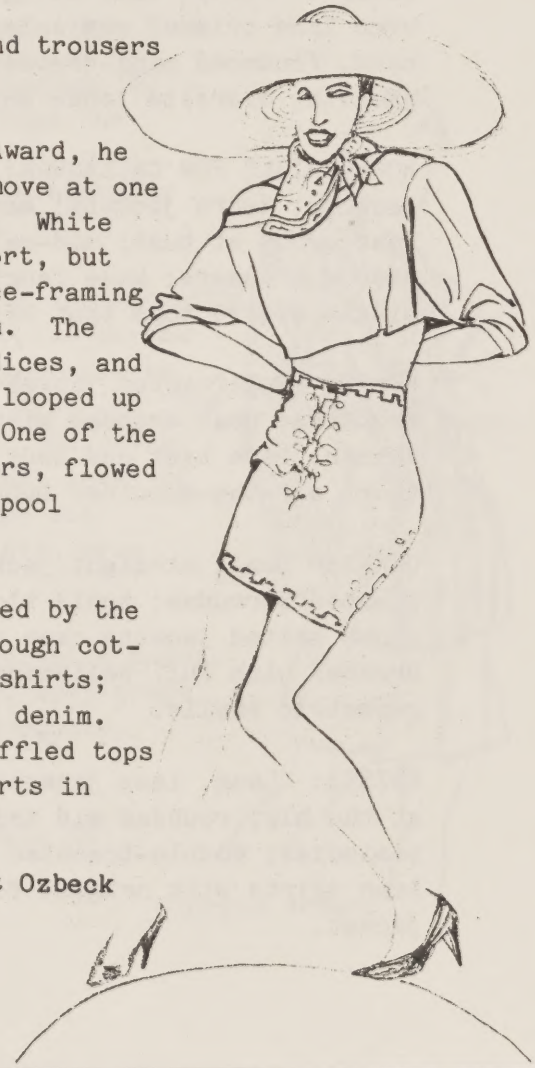
DESIGNER FOCUS

ALISTAIR BLAIR: Three-quarter jackets over skirts with contrast color from hips to waistband, emphasizing the high rise line; bell shaped skirt; bare shoulder short dresses; short taffeta dresses with sheer chiffon backs.

JASPER CONRAN: Soft necklines; short full skirts; shorts and trousers with short fitted jackets.

JOHN GALLIANO: Winner of the British Designer of the Year Award, he has given back to women grace and femininity. His clothes move at one with the body; the cut, complex-- the effect, uncomplicated. White blouses or curvy knits with highwaisted skirts; hemlines short, but often dipping or rising, to show the upper leg or knee. Face-framing necklines and asymmetric arcs cut across the shoulder or hem. The basic line is all on the curve with cap sleeves, rounded bodices, and high waists. Skirts include flat and bias cut pleats, hems looped up into an umbrella shape or into points like a handkerchief. One of the loveliest dresses-- a white organza that lapped the shoulders, flowed across the bosom and fell like undulating waves into a whirlpool skirt.

KATHERINE HAMNETT: Abbreviated T-shirts and leggings inspired by the Tour de France; short cotton pleated gym skirts with see through cotton voile blouses; gabardine trouser suits with crisp white shirts; bare midriff tops; jeans with flares and psychedelic printed denim. After dark-- washable taffeta dance coats; rhumba skirts; ruffled tops and tight bustiers cinched over a swirl of knife pleated skirts in primary brights and blacks.



Rifat Ozbeck

BRUCE OLDFIELD: Short skirts with tightly-tailored jackets; scooped neck bodices filled in with lace or chiffon; drawstring blouses; fringed leather, raffia embroidered skirts; belled skirts; tight skirts or full and frilled over petticoats; slender bell-shaped dresses in satin with chiffon necklines; embroidered sombreros.

RIFAT OZBEK: Brightly colored silk raffia skirts; skimpy fringed knits; off-the-shoulder rhumba tops; bolero jackets; high waist pants; bare midriffs; bright silk cummerbunds that accentuate waists; and skirts, short and tight or full and flounced.

PARIS

The sophisticated, elegant woman, at ease in her clothes, has been banished. In her place, a simpering girl decked in the frills and wrapping of coquetry, bare of shoulder and sporting skirt lengths that are more suited to the seashore than the city streets. The image conjured is not sensible nor is it modern but, rather a parody of the female form. However, there is one designer, Jean Paul Gaultier, who thoroughly understands the woman of 1988. He produced a collection that was innovative but wearable, feminine but without frothy nonsense. Much the same can be said of Issey Miyake. Not a frill to be seen in his collection, nor a restrictive seam. Miyake clothes the female form in fine wools and clean lines-- tunics swirl and cling to curves but never constrain and jerseys swoop low on a shoulder or high on a thigh. This was sensuality without restraint, not sexiness with restriction.

TRENDS: Off-the-shoulder jackets; off-the-shoulder collar suits; bare shoulders; decolletage, fichu and portrait collars; bosom emphasizing bustiers; cut out bodices and spaghetti straps; shorts with matching jackets; divided skirts; soft shoulders; micro-mini lengths; wide, fluid, long full and high waisted trousers; bib overalls; bell skirts; knotted wrap and fitted torso dresses; lace and lingerie looks.

FABRICS: Wool, wool jersey with seersucker texture, gabardine, plain and washed linen, ribbed cotton knits, cotton faille, pique, ottoman, poplin, quilted, drill, leather plain and pearlized, crepe de chine, raw silk, silk cloque, jacquard and jersey, silk gauze, organdy, stretch satin, lace taffeta, lame.

PATTERNS: Zebra and leopard prints, polka dots, bandana prints, menswear checks and plaids, gingham checks, large houndstooth checks, butterfly, fragile and Dufy-inspired florals, camelias and roses.

COLORS: Vibrant-- red, fuchsia, hot pink, royal, sun yellow, orange, bright and emerald green, aqua and violet. Quiets-- ivory, off white, khaki, beige and camel. Pales-- pink, sky blue, green, lavender and almond. As always-- black, white and navy.

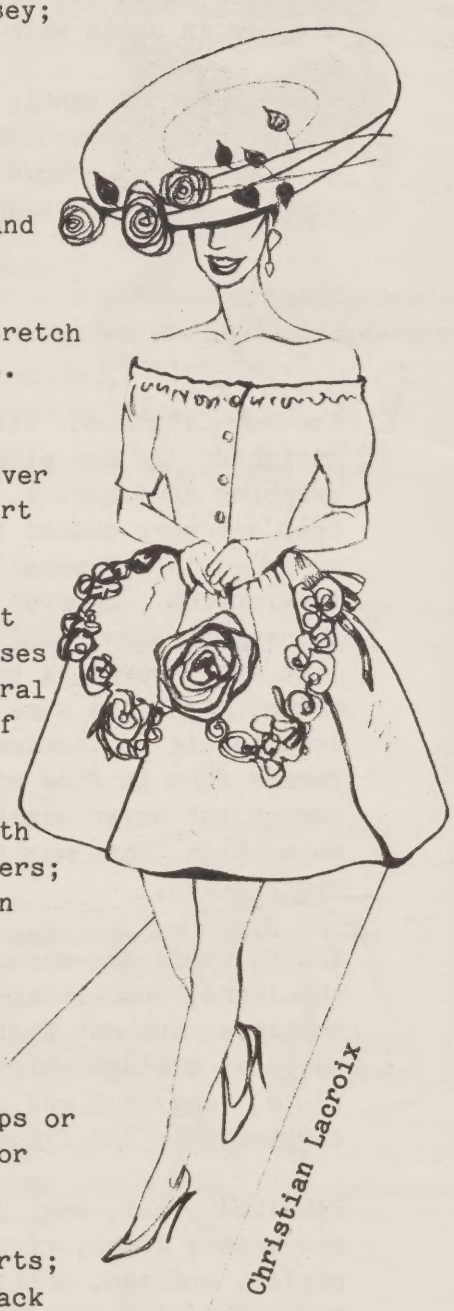
Valentino

DESIGNER FOCUS

JEAN PAUL GAULTIER: Jackets cut in curved seams to the body, swooped low at the neck to bare the shoulders topped with swathed scarves of floral chiffon or polka dotted silk; trousers in fine wool or jersey; jumpsuits; A-line dresses and tunics; body hugging dresses with scooped out decolletage and hiked up over long panties; long full transparent or apron skirts and bib trousers; high-waisted tube suspender skirts; tiny wrap sweaters and cross-over jackets.

PATRICK KELLY: Stretch tube dresses, some with flounce hemlines and bustier or spaghetti straps; ruffled wrap skirts and wrap blouses; nipped waist jackets with ruffled peplums over slim or flounced skirts. Bustier dresses; full coat dresses and 30's dresses in stretch satin; stretch denim; tuxedo coats over shorts, dresses and skirts.

CHRISTIAN LACROIX: Zip front waist length jackets over rounded skirts, or hip length jackets with balloon shaped puff shoulders over slim short skirts; high waisted dresses with fichu collars and short rounded skirts; bell shaped dresses with ruffles and embroidered ruffle ribbons; printed pajama trousers for day with short sleeve jackets-- for evening, in silk damask with sequinned jackets; short strapless sheaths with oversized hip balls; zip front bustier dresses with stiff petticoats and detachable sleeves; short dresses in floral printed taffeta or organza over black lace T-shirts; strapless puff ball dresses with bolero jackets.



SAINT LAURENT: Tailored double-breasted and collarless jackets with short skirts or trousers; ruffled neckline dresses with flouncy tiers; corselet tops with full skirts or tight bicycle pants; damask satin bloomers with midriff sashes and waist length jackets; ballerina strapless dresses in pastel tulle.

UNGARO: Knotted and tied dresses, wrapped and draped tightly or loosely around the body; nipped waist structured jackets with long swingy cardigan coats; shirred bustier dresses with spaghetti straps or flounced hemlines; shaped sheaths and cinched dresses with plunge or cut-out necklines; split level evening dresses.

VALENTINO: A-line shaped jackets, skirts and dresses; divided skirts; slender minis; fluid skirts cut in tiers or tapered long in the black with narrow short jackets; wide smocked waist easy dresses; shirred cocktail dresses-- some sporting flyaway, pleated or capelet backs.

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